

Hooker Mayor.

*Cur. specialis tent. Mercurii v°. die
Novemb. 1673. Annoque Reg.
Car. sec. Angl. &c. xxv°.*

It was Ordered by this Court, That Mr. Scor
be desired to print his Sermon, this day
preached at the *Guild-hall* Chappel, before
the Lord Mayor, and Aldermen of this City.

Wagstaffe.

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A
SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Right Honourable

THE

Lord Mayor,

AND

COURT of ALDERMEN;

At *Guild-Hall Chappel*, upon the 5th of
November, 1673.

IN

Commemoration of ENGLANDS De-
liverance from the *Gun-powder*
Treason.

By *John Scott* Minister of *St. Thomas's* in *Southwark.*

LONDON, Printed for *Tho. Taylor*, at
the Hand and Bible in the New Buildings on
London-Bridge, 1673.

SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Right Honourable
THE

Lord Mayor;

COURT of ALDERMEN;
at Guild-Hall, upon the 25th of
November, 1673.

Communion of ENGLANDS De-
liverance from the Gun-powder
Treason.

By John Milton, Minister of St. Dunstons in London.

LONDON, Printed for W. Taylor at
the Hand and Bible in the New Building at
London-bridge, 1673.

THE
EPISTLE
DEDICATORY

*To the Right Honourable Sir William
Hooker, Lord Mayor of London,
and to the Right Honourable the Court
of Aldermen.*

Right Honourable,

THough I esteem my self as
much as *I* deserve, and perhaps
a little more, yet *I* thank God
I was never yet so partial to my self, or
fond of my own Conceptions, as to
think the Publication of them an Act
of Charity, either to the world, or to
the Bookseller; and as for this Dis-
course, *I* assure you, had not you had a
better

The Epistle Dedicatory.

better opinion of it then *I*; *I* should have been so charitabl as to have kept it within doors, and not to have exposed it to the open Air, in which *I* have known many wiser discourses to have gotten their bane; but *I* shall not be so unmannerly as to controul your opinion, w^{ch} yet *I* doubt had not been so favourable to me, had not your Judgments been bribed by your Zeal to the Protestant Religion, against the Adversary whereof this discourse was designed, perhaps the Protestant Reader, who is unacquainted with the transactions of the last 600 years, may think *I* have been too severe upon the *Roman* Religion, charging it with such bloody Principles, and Practises: to which *I* shall say no more then this; that if *I* have falsified its Character, or represented it fouler than it is: let me
indure

The Epistle Dedicatory.

indure the shame, and punishment of a common Calumniator; but if I have drawn it according to its own natural Features, and Complexions; it is not my fault that it appears deformed, and if it be as bad as 'tis represented, it makes invectives enough against it self, and carries its Satyrs in its own bosom: But what I have said of it is all matter of Fact, which I have proved by the testimony of their own Authors, who cannot be supposed to be false witnesses against themselves, and if, after this, any one should be so obstinate as to suspect me of forgery; let him peruse the Martyrologies of the six last Centuries, and compare them with the bloodiest of all the ten Persecutions: and I doubt not but he will be of my opinion, viz. that *Domitian* and *Dioclesian* were but puny

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ny Persecutors, and Bunglers in cruelty compared with the infallible Cut-throats of the Apostolical Chair.

Having thus accounted for the honesty of this discourse; I have no more to say for it, but only this; that however it may succeed, it was well intended; and if it prove any way instrumental to alay the un-Christian heats, and Animosities among us, to promote the peace of the Church, and the interest of the Protestant Religion, I have my design: and though I should be defeated in this, it will be some satisfaction to me, that I have honour'd my self before the world by this address, and testified by my ready compliance with your commands how really I am,

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Your most humble and
Faithful Servant

John Scott.

*A Sermon Preached before the Right
Honorable the LORD MAYOR and
Court of Aldermen, Novemb. 1673.*

Luke 9. 56.

*For the Son of man came not to destroy mens lives, but
to save them.*

IT is the glory of the Christian Religion, that it hath conquered the World, and triumphed over all that opposed it, without any other weapon but its own victorious Beauty, and reasonableness: had it been Proclaimed by the mouths of Canon, or marched like *Paracelsus* his Dæmon, upon the pummel of the Sword: it had been Rivalled by sundry successful Impostures; and the Alcheron it self would have compared Victories with it: but in this it hath the pre-eminence of all the Religions that ever were, that it atchieved its Conquest without Scrib or Sword, without the aid of Worldly Force, or Policy: that by its own native Light, it Vanquished the Ignorance and Prejudice of the World; and by pure dint of Reason, subdued mens minds to its Impire: for 'twas not by Racks and Tortures, that it Converted Infidels, & Convinced Hereticks; but by Reason, and Miracles; and

A

till

till it began to be sophisticated with temporal inter-
 ests, and designs, it taught its followers only to in-
 dure, but not to inflict Persecutions: for this was their
 language in the purer Ages, *Non est Religionis, cogere*
Religionem, quæ suscipi debet sponte, non vi, as *Tertull.*
expresses it. Religion presseth no man to her service,
 and disdains to have any Followers, but Volunteers;
 but when once its Followers began to bend it to their
 interest, and make it the Solicitor of their temporal
 designs, to break into Parties, and imbarque their own
 Reputation, and in the success of those disputable Op-
 nions, that distinguished them, then according as they
 had the luck to succeed in their Disputes, and the fa-
 vour of the Emperors, they began to solicit, and arm the
 temporal power against their Adversaries; in which
 bad practice, they imitated those, whom in all other
 things they did condemn; namely the *Arrians* the
Circumcellians, and *Donatists*, who were the first
 Christians that either perswaded, or practised persecu-
 tion; and yet for a long while so abhorrent it was
 from the temper of Christians, that *Ursatus*, and *Ishri-*
us, two otherwise Catholick Bishops, for perswading
Maximus to destroy the *Priscillianists*, were branded
 by their Brethren with an infamous Character, and
 sharply reprov'd by the good Bishop of *Trevers*, who
 plainly tells them, *Satis, superque suffi-*
tere ut Episcopali sententia heretico Judi-
cati Ecclesijs pellerentur: novum est, &
inauditum nefas: ut causam Ecclesie Index seculi judi-
caret: It is sufficient that Hereticks be banished by the
 Church as Out-laws, from the Communion of Christi-
 ans: but it is a new and unheard of wickedness, that a
 Cause of Religion should be judged and punished by a
 secular

Sulp. Sev. Hist.
 lib. p. 152.

secular Tribunal ; and yet this was above 370 years after Christ : but as the Churches fortunes grew better, and her Sons grew worse, and some of her Fathers worst of all : so Persecution and Tyranny prevailed in Christendom, till at last it was baptized into the name of Zeal, and enthroned among the graces of Religion : for if we look into the History of the *Roman* Church, we shall find Persecution first Preached from the Infallible Chair : the Popes whereof growing great, and proud, and impatient of contradiction, began first to murmur against the Tollerations of the Novatians, which being a great eye-sore to those haughty Prelates, as soon as they had gotten power into their hands, they rooted them out by Force and Violence, but yet they had not so far abandoned all their natural sense of mercy and goodness, as to proceed to bloodshed, till the Divine Right of Fire and Faggot was invented by St. *Dominick*, that rabbid and furious Incendiary, by whose instigation the *Albigenses* were wasted by a dreadful War, and 180 of them burnt to death, because they would not abjure their Religion : which horrid butchery was acted by the Commission of Pope *Innocent* the third, Antin. pars 3. Tit. 19. cap. 1. who to encourage it, granted a plenary pardon and indulgence to the Executioners, and now like *Lybian* Tygers, having tasted Blood, they thirst insatiably for more ; and instead of Pastors turn Butchers to the Flock of Christ, by their repeated Cruelties, converting that Church into an infamous Slaughter-house of Christians, which was once so famous a Seminary of Martyrs, and for these 600 years bleeding, hath been the only Remedy those Spiritual Mountebanks have prescribed, to cure the Diseased Church ;

Church; and this hath been cryed up as their great Catholicon; witness the infinite Slaughters they have acted and intigated in *Italy Bohemia*, the upper and lower *Germany*: witness the *Spanish* Inquisition, where the Holy Fathers confute Hereticks with Racks and Gibbets; witness the *Parisian* Massacre, where our Religion was confuted only with Skenes, and Daggers, witness the *Marian* days, wherein the *Roman* Faith was defended so gloriously against all Arguments, with only that Dreadful Text, *Recant or Burn*: and if all this be not enough, witness that Horrid *Powder Plot*, the Prevention of which we now Commemorate; a Villany so Foul and Monstrous, as was never Parallell'd either in Fiction or History; and compared with which, the most Tragick Scenes of Melancholy Poets, and dismal Phantasms of Despairing Souls, are but all Comick Tales, Subjects of Sport and Laughter: a Tragedy so deep and bloody, that certainly had the most barbarous *Canibal* in *America* been hired to act it, the very thought of it must have startled him into an Agony; and he could not but have relented, considering thus with himself; I am now giving Fire to a Train, which at one blow will Ruine a whole Kingdom, tear in pieces its King and Princes, and scatter their Members in the Air, strew its Fields with the Limbs and Quarters of its slaughtered Nobles and Gentry, fill its Streets with the Threns and Lamentations of woful Mothers, the shrieks and ont cryes of desolate Wives & Children, shake its goodly Temples, and Royal Palaces into ruines, and in one moment lay all its glory in the dust: and yet *[O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon:]* All these Cruelties were designed under the livery of the
 most

most merciful Jesus, and this Cannibals feast of fellow-Christians blood prepared to entertain the Father of Mercies, and the Prince of Love; as if they like the Heathens Dæmons, fed their hungry Nostrils with the Niderous reeks and streams of humane sacrifices: Thus by degrees you see Persecution is imbodyed into the Romish Religion; and when Heresie is the Disease, Ruine is the only Remedy: A sure one indeed; but O how heavenly wide of those mild prescriptions of the great Physician of souls! who being urged by his own Disciples to revenge himself upon a company of rude and obstinate Scismaticks, solemnly professes, that he came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them. The occasion of which words was an affront which the *Samaritans* had offered to our blessed Saviour; who being notorious Scismaticks, and professed enemies to the *Jews*, that worshipped at *Jerusalem*, refused to entertain our Saviour for one night; perceiving he was a *Jew*, and so of a contrary Religion to themselves, upon which *James* and *John* moved with great indignation, to see their blessed Master so unworthily treated, request him, that after the example of *Elias*, they might call for fire from Heaven to destroy them: but he no way approving their motion, severely rebukes them for it, and plainly tells them, that they knew not what spirit they were of; as much as if he should have said, if you will needs imitate that Legal zelotick spirit *Elias* acted by; whatever you pretend, you act not like my Disciples, whose spirit and genius ought to be more tender and merciful; and therefore, though these *Samaritans* are of a different Sect and Religion, and will not embrace me, nor my Doctrine, yet far be it from me to destroy

destroy them; for this is quite contrary both to my temper, and the design of my coming; which is not to destroy mens lives, but to save them. So that you see the plain scope of the words is this; That to destroy mens lives upon the score of Religion, is a practice contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and the design of his Religion. Before I proceed to the proof of this Proposition, I shall briefly endeavour to state, and restrain it within its just bounds and limits: and they are these four.

First, That it is not to be understood of any Religion, that is in its own nature wicked and immoral: for if a mans Religion teacheth Vice, or directly patronizeth it, his Vice is not the less punishable, because his Religion prompted him to it. Indeed if he keep his wicked Opinion to himself, it cannot be punished, because it cannot be known; but if he perswade others to it, or practise it himself; it becomes matter of fact, and is as punishable as the crime is it perswades to: for the great Rules of Virtue and Good Life, are so clear and perspicuous, that a man cannot be ignorant of them, without being faulty: and therefore if a man embrace a wicked Opinion, and act or spread it, the matter of fact is justly punishable, according to the proportion of its malignity. And indeed if wicked actions were to be excused upon the score of Conscience, or Opinion, Religion would be made a Sanctuary for all the villainies in the world; and there is no crime so monstrous, but would make a shift to shelter it self from punishment under the protection of Conscience.

Secondly, And more particularly, that the Proposition is not to be understood of such Opinions, as

either

either directly, or in their immediate consequents, undermine the foundations of Government: for Government being indispensably necessary to the well-being of the world, men ought to know that that can be no good Religion which teacheth Doctrines, whose consequents destroy it; and therefore its just and reasonable it should be rooted out, as a dangerous pest, and nuisance to the publick interest; and the necessity of the thing, will justify the lawfulness of it: For were Princes bound to tolerate ungovernable principles, they must be Kings no longer than they can get leave to reign, from the humour or conscience of each hot-brained Opinionists; and all their Authority must be dependant upon the little capricio's of every peevish Zealot; the consequents of which must be the dissolution of Government, and that an in-let to all disorder and confusion: and therefore those that under a pretence of Religion propagate such principles, are justly accountable for all the consequent inconveniences, and punishable accordingly.

Thirdly, That the Proposition is not to be understood of our practice, but of our Judgements and Opinions: for every man hath a natural Right, as he is a Rationable creature, to judg for himself; and to punish any one for so doing, is the greatest tyranny in the world; it being an exercise of dominion over the minds of men, which are subject only to the Empire of God; but as for our practice, that's liable to the restraints of humane Laws; and that as well in Sacred, as in Civil Affairs; they cannot indeed oblige us to do what God hath forbidden us, because his being the supreme Authority, ought to take place against all

all the countermands of any inferiour power whatsoever; but then there are a world of things which remain in a state of indifferency, and are left undetermined both by the natural, and positive Laws of God: and these are all liable to the commands and determinations of humane Authority, and are the proper matter of Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws; to the extent of whose jurisdiction, there can be no other restraint, than only the countermand of a Superiour Authority; and therefore if there be nothing antecedently evil enjoined by the Laws, whether Civil, or Ecclesiastical, we are bound to obey them; and if we do not, we are justly punishable for our disobedience. Indeed if we believe the thing enjoined to be evil, though it be not, we ought not to do it, in obedience to the Supreme Authority of God, which we believe hath forbidden it: but yet if we mistake, and the thing be not evil, but in its own nature indifferent, we are justly punishable for the not doing it, because our mistake alters not the nature of the thing; if it be indifferent, it is a proper object of humane Laws, whether we think it so or no, and as such may justly be imposed; and the imposition being just, our not obeying it must needs be justly punishable. In this extremity therefore we have no other redress, but to seek information, and get our mistaken consciences better instructed; and if when we have done all, we cannot alter our Opinion, our meek and patient submission to the penalty, will be our excuse before the Tribunal of God.

Fourthly, And lastly, that the Proposition is not to be understood of our making a publick profession of our Opinions, so as to disturb the Peace of the Church

Church with them, so long as men are humble and modest in their dissent, and do not go about to advance their Opinions into Factions, and to divide and rend the Church in the propagation of them, I see no reason why they should be punished, and persecuted for them; but if men openly profess their dissent, to the prejudice of the publick Peace and Intrest, and doat so much upon their own conceits, as to phancy them necessary for all the rest of Mankind, and consequently go about to vex their neighbours, provoke their Rulers, and unsettle the Government for the propagation of them; if through an inconsiderate Zeal for their own notions, they should be active and industrious to make a Party against the Church, and withdraw others from her communion, they are offenders to the publick Peace, and as such are justly liable to punishment: for they ought to consider, that unless their Opinion be of greater moment than the Churches Peace, it ought to vail, and give way to it, and that there are no Opinions weighty enough to ballance the Churches Peace, whose contraries do not undermine Christianity it self, and utterly defeat the ends of Christian Society: for everyman is obliged, by vertue of being in Society, to do his utmost to preserve the honour and intrest of it, and to joyn in all acts of it, so far as they tend thereunto; and dissent from every thing which tends to the apparent ruine of that Society. Now the main end of Christian Society, being the honour of God, and the salvation of souls: the primary reason of mens entering into Churches, or Christian Societies, is to advance these ends, and to joyn in all acts of the Society they are listed into, so far as they tend to the

advancement of them; but if any thing be required
 of us directly repugnant to these ends, we are bound
 to manifest and declare our dissent from them, and if
 for so doing we are ~~now~~ cast out of the particular Chri-
 stian Society; by so doing, and suffering, we preserve
 our communion with the Catholick Society of Chri-
 stians; but if I am never so much perswaded that such
 a practice or Article of the Church is an error; yet
 if it be not such an error as doth defeat the great
 ends of Christian Society, I am bound either to keep
 my persuasion to my self, or at least not to disturb
 the Peace of the Church in my indeavours to propa-
 gate it to others; because, next to the honour of
 God, and the salvation of souls, the Churches Peace
 is to be valued above all things whatsoever; and
 therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of every
 little error, and trifling Opinion: It is sufficient that
 we are allowed the liberty of opining, and are not
 deprived of our natural right of judging for our
 selves; and we ought not to complain, though we
 should be restrained by Laws and penalties, from ma-
 king Parties against the Church, and propagating our
 little Opinions into Factions; since if we will not
 restrain our selves, without such a restriction, it is im-
 possible there should be any Peace among Christian
 Societies; every hot-brain'd Opinionist will be
 making a Party for himself; and every differing Op-
 nion will grow into a Sect; and so there will be con-
 tinual dividing and subdividing, till the Christian
 world be crumbled into as many Churches, as there
 are Opinions; and as many Opinions as there are
 men: for whilst every one is zealously propagating
 his little Opinion, no man will let his Brother be quiet;

this man will be ready to burst till he hath vented himself; and the other will be as impatient till he hath contradicted what he hath said: and whilst both are thus zealous to proselite each other, neither will be content with a single conquest; but the publick must be disturbed, and by the Zeal of the contending Parties, rent into infinite Sects and Divisions; so that you see it is indispensibly necessary, that there should be some restraint, though not upon mens Opinions, yet upon their publick profession of them, since without it, the Church will be inevitably exposed to perpetual tumults and disturbances. Having thus stated and bounded the Proposition, you see the plain meaning of it is this, That it is contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and the genius of Christianity, to destroy or persecute men for meer Opinions, or errors in Religion: that it is so, I shall endeavour to prove from the following Instances.

I. It is contrary to that tenderness and compassion which Christianity requireth of us: For our Religion enjoins us to sympathize with the miserable; and not to add afflictions to the afflicted; and therefore fallibility being the natural imperfection, and unhappiness of humane understandings, the errors of them should rather be the subject of our pity, than our revenge: for 'tis as much out of our power, not to err, as not to be sick or die: and we may as reasonably punish a man for not being immortal, as for not being infallible: for the seeds of fallibility are sown in the nature of our understandings, as well as those of mortality in the temper of our bodies; and we can no more avoid being mistaken in all instances than we can prevent the consumption of our radical moisture;

all we can do is to endeavour not to err ; to stand as fast as we can in the center of Truth ; but if when we have done so, we should reel on either hand towards the circumference of error ; we have done our duty, and were not bound not to be mistaken : for no obligation can reach a mans conscience, if it be impossible ; we cannot be bound to do more than our best ; to have the understanding of an Angel, or to be infallible ; for these are things that are not within the sphere of our choice, and therefore are no matters of Law, or subjects of rewards and punishments : 'Tis true, error is many times occasioned by a corrupt bias in the will ; and mens understandings are frequently misled by their lusts ; and then indeed the error hath a guilt derived to it from that evil principle to which it owes its original : but if we see men honest in their lives, we are bound to think them so in their errors too ; and if their errors be only innocent mistakes, what an inhumanity is it to persecute them for that which is their misery only, and not their sin ? who but a *Barbarian* would cut a mans throat, for being poor, or blind, or lame ? and is it not altogether as barbarous, and cruel to destroy a man for that, which is the poverty, and blindness, and lameness of his understanding ? what is this, but to lay load upon load ; to trample upon the prostrate, and heap miseries on the miserable ? Suppose that a different education, different Books and company, have cast thy Brothers understanding into a different figure from thine ; is it reasonable that therefore thou shouldest persecute and destroy him ? or rather is it not as unreasonable, as if thou shouldest cut off his head, because he hath a dimple upon his chin, or a mould

mould on his cheeks, or some line in his face that renders him unlike thee? suppose he hath the ill luck to believe some Proposition, which to you and I seems wild, absurd and unreasonable, must we presently beat out his Opinion with his brains, because the poor soul was so unfortunate as to be mis-led by education, and imposed upon by Authority and Custom, which we see do so often cheat the honestest minds; and like a mighty whirlpool, having once sucked a man in, do keep his head under water, and make it almost impossible for him to emerge, or recover himself? How can such a piece of cruelty, do ye think, consist with the tenderness and compassion which our Religion enjoins.

II. It is destructive of the union and harmony among Christians, which the Christian Religion requires: for certainly the design of Christianity is not to reconcile mens notions, or to beget in the world an universal harmony in systems of orthodox Opinions; which considering the frame of humane nature, the infinite variety of mens ages and complexions, and the different sizes of our understandings, would be, I doubt, as vain a project, as to attempt to build a Castle in the Air: nor indeed is it necessary that men should be all of one Opinion, any more than that all should be of one humour and temper: for as in these, Divine Providence hath made a great diversity, in which there is both beauty, and convenience: so perhaps for the same reason it hath contrived variety of Opinions, in which if there were an universal harmony, mankind would be at a loss for subjects of discourse, and so be deprived of a great part of the pleasures of conversation. The union therefore
which

which our Religion doth so studiously design, and zealously promote, is that of hearts and affections; and this, I doubt not, might well enough consist with different Opinions, were they but managed with that Humility, Modesty, and Charity which becomes Christians: were we but so modest, as to propose our Opinions calmly, or to keep them to our selves; so humble as not to over-value our own notions, and fancy them necessary for all the rest of mankind; so Charitable, as to allow our Brethren a liberty of Opining, and not to Damn and Persecute them, because their Brains are of a different Figure from ours; I cannot imagin why difference in Opinions should more disturb the Church, than difference in Faces; for such a demeanour one towards another would infallibly keep our Charity alive, which when all is done, is the strongest ligament of Christian Society, and the surest band of the Communion of Saints; for this will twine and clasp our souls together, and tye us one to another by the heart strings: But the destroying mens lives upon the score of their Opinions, is the most effectual way in the world to supplant Charity. For how is it possible, considering the passions of humane nature, that the Persecuted Party should love their Persecutors, whom they see armed with Fire and Faggot to destroy them? and when once they hate them (as they will soon do when they cease to love them) their passion will immediately provoke their Reason to damn and censure them, which is the only means that Persecuted People have a stay to the stomach of their hungry Vengeance, till they have power, and opportunity to glut it in the blood of their Persecutors: and if in the revolution of things, the Persecuted

should

should get above their Persecutors, what can be expected, but that to preserve themselves, they will destroy them from whom they can expect nothing but destruction, should another revolution mount them uppermost again; and so Christendom will be made a Cock-pit of Cruelties, and as often as mens understandings are deceived, and abused; so often there will be new Executions and Massacres, which must therefore needs be the more cruel and unmerciful, because they are so Consecrated with a pretence of Religion: for when Religion, which should be the Antidote of our Cruelty, proves its greatest Incentive; it must needs run on the faster into mischief, by how much that which stopped its course before, drives it on with the greater violence; so that by Persecuting men upon the score of Opinion, we do what in us lies, to banish Charity out of the World; and in the room of that Love and Union, which our Religion injoyns, to introduce nothing but Rage, Revenge, and Cruelty; and to make Christendom more Barbarous than America.

It's contrary to that method which Christianity prescribes us for the Convincing Deceived, and for the Persuading the only Remedy our Holy Religion prescribes for the Cure of Errour, is Charity, and Forbearance, Mercy and Reason; for the sense and Spirit of Christianity is described in these excellent words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 2. 24. *The Servants of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging the Truth. So that unless we can torture men without striving with them, and meekly instruct*
them

them by cutting their throats, its evident by this Text, we must either not persecute men, or quit the title of being the servants of God. So also the same Apostle in Gal. 6. 1. *Brethren, if any man be overtaken with an error, ye that are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.* And sure there is some difference between destroying, and restoring a man; between the halter, and the spirit of meekness. 'Tis true indeed, the procedure of the Gospel was more severe and rigorous against wicked and obstinate Hereticks; but then it was not for their Opinions barely; but for the wickedness of their Opinions, and obstinate perseverance in them, to the disturbance of the Churches Peace; both which I have shewed you are excepted cases: but yet as the Gospel was a great deal tenderer of making Hereticks, than the Church of Rome is; so was it also a great deal gentler in punishing them; for its utmost severity against them was excommunication, which at the worst did not destroy mens souls; but only consigned them to that sad portion they had deserved, and should have received independently from the Churches censure; but the primary design of it was to scare them into a sober mind; which if it obtained, it proceeded no further, so that in its own nature it was medicinal; and though it was a distasteful and uneasy potion, by reason it gave the Devil possession of their bodies, to torment and afflict them; yet in it self 'twas wholesome, and restorative, and did no man hurt, unless he would himself; but if he would be obstinate in his wickedness, notwithstanding he felt the woful effects of it, he might thank himself for all that followed, it being his own obstinacy that actuated the Judgement, and gave a sting to it.

But

but to destroy a mans life is as strange a way to cure him of his Errors, as cutting off his head is to cure him of the Toothach; for the only way to reduce him, is to perswade his understanding, which we shall hardly do by beating out his Brains; 'tis true indeed, corporal punishments may make a man dissemble his Opinion, and profess contrary to his Conscience and Judgement; but they have no more Vertue in them to inform his Conscience, or rectifie his Judgement than syllogisms, or demonstrations have, to cure him of the Stone or Strangury, and therefore what ever he may pretend, he cannot think his Opinion truer or falser, because you threaten to wrack and torture him for it, for such premisses can infer, no conclusion but only that of his life, so whilst you attempt by such rough arguments to force him into your Opinion; you may perhaps vanquish his Courage, but you will never alter his Judgement; and if you make him a Hypocrite, and terrifie him into a Profession of what he doth not believe; instead of erecting a Trophie to God, you shall but build a Monument for the Devil: And as Persecution is a bad remedy for Errors, so 'tis a worse Antidote against it; for if you consult Ecclesiastical history you will find, that Fire and Faggot hath made more Hereticks, than it ever destroyed, witness the *Priscillianists*, who as *Sulpitius* tells us, were so far from being suppressed by the death of *Priscillian*, that they were more confirmed by it, and grew much more numerous; and it is the complaint of one of the *Italian* Inquisitors, that he had found after 40 years experience, wherein they had destroyed above 100000 Hereticks; they were so far

Ger. Budrag.
Epist. ad Cordid.
Pisat.

from being suppressed or weakened, that they were much more strengthened and encreased. For there is a popular pitty that follows all persons in misery, which breeds likeness of affection, and that very often likeness in Opinion; and so much the rather, because he that Persecutes another for his Opinion, gives the multitude reason to suspect, that that is the best argument he can urge against it: whereas on the contrary, he that dies for his Opinion, and seals it with his Blood, confirms it with the most popular argument in the world; for although [as one says] laying a wager be an argument of confidence, rather then of truth; yet when a man stakes his life and soul, it argues at least, that he is resigned, and Honest, and Charitable, and Noble; and this among weak people will more advance his Opinion then reason, and demonstration: So by persecuting of Error, we do what in us lyes to Canonize it; and by Crowning of it with the glory of Martyrdom; we take an effectual course to encrease the number of its Voterys.

IV. And lastly, It is contrary to that care, and tender regard of Truth, which Christianity injoyns us; for in many instances there is so near a resemblance between Truth and Error, that our purblind reason can hardly distinguish between them; and therefore if Error were left to the Persecutions of such fallible creatures as we, Truth would be exposed to inevitable danger; for if you set a blind man to weed your Garden; you must expect that sometimes he will pull up flowers instead of weeds: and if we that are so prone to err, should be authorized to root up Error, 'twould be impossible but we should sometimes mistake, and root up Truth instead of Error; and therefore our

Saviour

Saviour considering this, hath reserved that power in his own hands, as you may see at large in *Matth. 13. 24. &c.* Another Parable put he forth unto them, saying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man that soweth good seed in his field, and while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among his wheat, and went away:* upon which this mans servants ask him, in the 28 verse, *if they should go and gather up the tares; to which he answers him, nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them: let both grow together until the Harvest.* By the field here, all men agree, we are to understand the Church, and by the seed sown in it, that of the pure and sound doctrines of Religion; so that all the difficulty of the Parable, lyes in understanding what is meant by the tares, and what by the not gathering the tares: By the tares, must be meant either persons of wicked lives, or of false and evil Opinions; and by the not gathering these tares, must be understood, either the not cutting them off by the Temporal sword, or the not excommunicating, and cutting them off by the Spiritual sword; but by the tares, cannot be meant persons of wicked lives, for then the Text would forbid the punishment of evil doers; by not gathering the tares, cannot be meant the not cutting them off by the Spiritual sword, for then the Text would forbid the Church to excommunicate either wicked livers, or obstinate Hereticks: And therefore of necessity by the tares, must be meant persons of evil Opinions; and by the not gathering them, the not destroying them by the Temporal sword, and this Interpretation is very much favoured, by the reason that is given of the Prohibition, *least ye also root up the wheat with them; as if*

he should have said, as for external wickednesses, I freely leave them to the lash of humane Judicatures; the rectitude or obliquity of them being far more discernable, then of inward speculations, and Opinions; but I will by no means trust you with the punishment of Errors; least through interest, passion, or mistake, you should exterminate the Truth with it, for you being so fallible, and apt to err, it is impossible but sometimes you must miss the mark; mistake the wheat for tares, and hit the Truth, though you aime at Error. Having thus shewed you how contrary it is to the spirit, and genius of Christianity, to destroy mens lives, upon the score of mere Opinion, or Religion; I shall now conclude what I have said, with one inference from the whole.

Use, From hence I infer, the Antichristian tyranny of the Church of *Rome*, who hath fleshed her self with so many slaughters, and dyed her Garments so deep in the blood of Christians, upon no other score, but only their differing from her, in some (at least) disputable, and harmless Opinions; because upon her bare word they could not believe propositions, which to them seemed contrary to sense, and reason, and Scripture and their Faith had not stomach enough, to digest the most fulsome absurdities and swallow the grossest contradictions: Blessed Jesu! that ever a Church pretending to be thy Spouse, should be so forgetful of thy mercies, as to spill the blood of so many thousands of Christians, upon no other account, but because they could not believe her absolution such a Philosophers Stone, as to turn attrition into effectual Repentance; and a few words of a Priest, such a powerful charm, as to conjure a man to Heaven in an instant: and because thou hast made holiness

ness the sole condition of eternal life, durst not depend upon confraternities, stations, and priviledge-Altars, *Agnus Dei's*, little offices, amulets, and such like hallowed baubles, because they could not worship Images, and pray to God, and Saints in the same form of words, and durst not run from Scripture, to uncertain traditions, and from ancient traditions, unto new pretences; from reasonable services, into blind devotions; from believing the necessity of inward acts of piety, and devotion, into a dangerous temptation of resting upon the *Opus Operatum*, the meer numbring of so many Beads, and saying of so many prayers! that ever Christians should be destroyed by Christians, for not believing all those monstrous absurdities, which transubstantiation implies, that Christs body may be in a thousand places at the same time; that it may stay in a place while it is going from it, be both in, and out of the same place, in the same moment; that it may come from Heaven to Earth, and yet never stir out of Heaven, nor be any where in the way between; that his whole body is in each crumb of each consecrated wafer, and that without being lessened, all its parts are crouded up into one single attom, and lye all within the compass of a Pin's head, though it be 4 foot long; that though it be whole and entire in every crumb, and there be 10000 of these crumbs in 10000 distant places; yet doth it not multiply into 10000 bodies, but still remains one and the same: now what greater tyranny can there be, than to destroy and massacre men for not believing such a mass of palpable contradictions? and yet for these, and such like causes it is that *Rome* hath so often washed her barbarous hands in Protestant blood;

blood; imbroiled the Christian world, and by the terrour of her awful thunder-bolts, scared Subjects into Rebellion against their lawful Sovereigns, and Sovereigns into persecution of their natural Subjects: of the truth of which I could give you a thousand foreign instances; but in compliance with the time and occasion, I shall rather chuse to confine my self at home: to destroy mens lives upon the score of Religion, was a practice never known in *England*, till the time of *Henry* the 4th; who being an Usurper, and so liable to many enemies, both foreign and domestick; sought to endear the Pope to him, who was then moderator of Christendom, by sending him, as a token of his love and duty, the blood of his enemies: and for many years after this was the yearly sacrifice our *English* Monarchs were fain to offer up to the *Roman* Idol; and whensoever through their own weakness, they either feared, or were forced to flatter him; they had no other way to appease the angry Demon, but by causing their children to pass through the fire to him, and glutting his thirsty vengeance with their blood: but when afterwards our *English* Monarchs threw off the *Roman* yolk, and would no longer be the Popes Leeches; he immediately issueth out his Bulls, and excommunications to alarum their subjects into a Rebellion against them: for immediately upon *Queen Elizabeth's* coming to the Throne, *Pope Paul* the 4th. refuseth to acknowledge her, pretending this Crown to be a fee of the Papacy, and that therefore it was audaciously done of her, to assume it without his leave; and because she would not turn out immediately, when her great Landlord had given her such fair warning, *Pope Pius* the 5th. takes out a Writ of Eject.

Ejection, issueth out his Bull, and deposeth her ; in which he thus expresseth himself, *Volumus, & jubemus ut adversus Elizabetham Angliæ Reginam subditi arma capeffant*; it is our will and command that the Subjects of *England* take up Arms against their Queen: upon which followed the Northern Rebellion, and sundry private attempts of the Papists, to murder her : Afterwards Pope *Gregory* the 15th. having two Bastards to provide for, one of his own, and another of the Emperours, he bestowed the Kingdom of *England* upon the one, and that of *Ireland* upon the other ; but neither of these prevailing, *Sixtus* the 5th. curses her afresh, and publishes a crusade against her ; and bequeaths the whole right of her Dominions to *Philip* the 2d. King of *Spain* ; but when neither the Popes bounty, nor the blessings of his successors, nor the *Spanish* Arms, nor *Italian* Arts, could prevail against God's providence, which till the end of her daies pitched its tents about her. Pope *Clement* the 8th. seeing there was no other remedy, resolved to let her go like a Heretick as she was, and to take more care that another Heretick might not succeed her ; for which end he sent over two Breves into *England* ; one to the Clergy, and another to the Laity ; commanding them not to suffer any but a Catholick, though never so near in blood to succeed her ; the design of which was to exclude King *James*, who was the sole Heir apparent to the Crown; upon which the Papists indeavoured to their utmost, to prevent his coming in, and afterwards to throw him out again ; and when neither took effect, at last they resolve to send him to Heaven with a vengeance, by a blow of Gun-powder ; which was a villany so black and odious, that the Romanists themselves do blush

to own it : And indeed, were it not so apparent from the confessions of the Traitors themselves ; who acknowledged the Jesuits to be their Conspirators, that egged them on by their pernicious counsels ; swore them to secresie by the holy Trinity, and gave them the Sacrament upon it, that they should neither withdraw themselves from, nor discover it to others without common consent : I say, were it not for these, and a thousand other notorious circumstances, one would have thought it impossible such a hellish design could ever have been acted under the wing and patronage of the best Religion that ever was : but he that shall consider the bloody principles with which the *Roman* Church hath sophisticated Christianity, must needs confess that there is no wickedness so horrid, of which her Religion will not make her capable ; for 'tis decreed by the *Lateran* Council, that in case any Prince be a favourer of Hereticks, the Pope shall discharge his Subjects from their allegiance, and give away his Kingdom to some Catholick, who upon rooting out those Hereticks, shall possess it without contradiction : and 'tis the general Doctrine of her most celebrated Divines, that the Pope hath power to depose Kings at his pleasure ; and this Father *Parsons* determines to be a point of Faith, to believe it is in the Popes power to depose Heretical Princes ; and that subjects are upon their being declared heretical, thereby absolved from all duty of obedience to him ; and this *Bellarmin* proves at large, by giving us sundry examples of Popes, who have deposed Kings and Emperours ; as of *Gregory* the second, who deprived the Emperour *Leo* of a great part of his Dominions, because he opposed

Thit p 1 edit.
Elizab. p. 149.

opposed the worship of Images; of Pope *Zacherie* who deposed *Childerick* of *France*; of *Gregory* the 7th who deposed *Henry* the 4th Emperor of *Germany*; of *Innocent* the 3^d, who deposed the Emperor *Otho* the 4th; of *Innocent* the 4th, who deposed *Frederick* the 2^d, and *Clement* the 6th, who also deposed *Lewis* the 6th, and so at last gravely concludes; that because they had done so, they might do so still; as if wickedness were sanctified by wicked Examples. So also *Gregory de Valentia* affirms, that an Heretical Prince may by the Popes Sentence be deprived of his Life, Estate, and Sovereignty. But beyond all these are those Traiterous positions of *Mariana* the *Spanish* Jesuite; who affirms, That it is not only Lawful to kill a King upon the Popes Sentence; but also upon the Verdict of a few Learned Doctors: and discoursing *pro* and *con* of the most convenient way of doing it, at last determines Poisoning to be the most Orthodox, and Catholick. And if we look into the Histories of these last 600 years, we shall find their practice hath made a bloody Comment on their Doctrines; for in those days when Excommunications from *Rome* were so terrible, and all things shrunk at the flash of those Thunders; it was the ordinary Recreation of those insolent Prelates, to play at Foot-ball with the Crowns of Princes, and trample on the Necks of Emperors: as the *Fredericks*, the *Henries*, the *Lodovici*, *Bavari*, found by woful experience, who were abandoned of their Subjects, their Kindred, their Allies, their own Children; were troden under foot, deposed from their Empires, delamed as Hereticks, and chased like Raskals.

De Rom, Pont.
lib. 15. c. 89.

Tom. 3. in Thom.
dis. 1. q. 12. p. 1.

De Reg. Inst. 1.
1. c. 6.

These goodly Mirrours one would think were sufficient to warn all Christian Princes to shake off the Yoke that for so many ages hath galed the Necks of their Ancestors. But if after so many woful Examples, there should remain any doubt of the Tyrannick Cruelties of *Rome*, let us Remember that pair of Royal Sacrifices the two last *Henry's* of *France*, both barbarously murdered by the Popes Executioners: the First by the hand of a Fryar, whose Villany was com-

Orat. Sixt. 5th.
Printed at Paris.
1589.

mended by Pope *Sixtus* the 5th in an Oration to his Cardinals; wherein he compares the Fact with the Incarnation

and Resurrection of Christ: and the Fryars Virtue and Courage, and servent Love to God, to that of *Judith*, and *Eliazar*, in the *Maccabees*. Blessed God! what wickedness will these men stick at the head of whose Religion Cannonizeth Regicide, and Christians murder a meritorious Virtue? and why should the Papists be ashamed to own the *Powder Treason*, [which though it may compare with the blackest Intemperies of Hell, and was foul enough to bring the Devil himself into disgrace] yet was warranted by the Principles of their bloody Religion? But 'tis an old Maxim of the *Roman* Politicks, never to own an unsuccessful Villany; and without doubt had not the *Parisian* Massacre taken effect, in which 30000 Protestants were slaughtered in one night, the Papists would have as loudly disclaimed that, as now they do the *Powder Treason*: but it being successful, the news of it at *Rome*, as their own *Thuanus* tells us, was welcomed with Publick

Thuan. Hist.
lib. 53.

Festivals, bonfires, and Triumphs; the Pope himself congratulating the Inhumane cruelty of the *French* King, commending the Patch of those bloody Wretches, whose hands were imbrewed

in the Slaughter, and distributing his Paternal Blessings among them: And without all controversie had *Faux* and *Catesby* been but as successful as they, their Faith had been as much praised, and their Persons as much blessed; and the *Fifth of November* had been as high a Festival in the *Roman* Calender, as it is now in the *English*. Thus if you trace the *Romish* Religion in all her late Progresses, you will find that her way hath lead all along through a wilderness of Confusion, and a Red Sea of Blood: and though now she exerciseth less Cruelties in the World, than formerly; yet her Will is the same, her Principles the same, her Documents of Cutting Throats the same, though blessed be God her Power and Interest is abated: For now a days, Princes are grown too stout to kiss his Holiness's Toe, to hold his Stirrup, and run like Lacquies at his heels: Those Golden Days are gone, and he that was wont to Command, is fain to Intreat his own Children; and as an Ingenious Author hath observed, whilst Princes can stand upon their own legs, they may goe their own pace, as fast and as slow as they please; but should any misfortune throw them upon all four, we shall soon see his Holiness get up and Ride them what pace he pleases: and being bestrid by such a furious *Jehu*, to be sure they will want neither Whip nor Spur to make them as swift to shed blood as ever. For thus at present, the *French* King may allow his *Hugonots* what liberty he pleases, and his Holiness is fain to sit still, and be silent; being kept in aw by that Puissant Monarch, whose Cannon Bullets, are grown too strong for his Thunder-bolts: But the Case was otherwise with *Charles* the 9th, who being weakened by Faction, and impoverished by civil Broils, was in a manner

unecessitated to that Infamous Butchery at *Paris*, to appease the Pope, and prevent the Excommunication he threatened him, unless he speedily destroyed the *Hugonots* with Fire and Sword: And indeed the Pope is bound both by their Councils, and Canons to destroy Hereticks, if he can; and which is all one, to Excommunicate their Favouers: for this is decreed in the 4th *Lateran* Council, that all Hereticks should be Excommunicated, and then delivered up to the lash of the Secular Powers: but if the Prince, or Secular Power being Required, and Admonished by the Church, do not endeavour to their utmost, to exterminate, and destroy these Hereticks, he shall be presently Excommunicated by the Metropolitan or Arch-Bishop; and if within a year he doth not amend, his obstinacy shall be signified to the Pope, *Ut ex tunc ipse Vasallos ab ejus fidelitate denuntiet absolutos*, &c. That from that time the

Conc. Lat. 4^c. 3.

Collect. divers. consiliorum pars 3. p. 72.

Pope may denounce his Subjects absolved from their Allegiance to him: and *Gregory* the 13th, in that famous Bull of his, Intituled *Littera processus lecta die Cene Domini*, Excommunicates, all *Hussites*, *wiclivites*, *Zuinglians*, *Calvinists*, *Hugonots*, and other Hereticks, together with their Concealers, and Favouers, and in general all those which defend them; so that according to this Bull, a Child cannot conceal his Parents, nor a Prince Rescue his Subjecte from the Popes Blood-hounds, under the Penalty of Excommunication. And Pope *Julius* the 3^d in another Bull, hath determin'd, That if any man examin the

De Vita Ignati. l. 3.
c 21. p. 335.

Doctrines of the Pope, by the Rule of Gods word, and seeing it is different, chance to contradict it, he shall be rooted out with Fire

Fire and Sword. Was not this a precious Vicar, do you think, thus to doom men to slaughter, for not believing his own unreasonable dictates, before the infallible Oracles of God himself? And yet these Bulls of the Popes, with the rest of their *Decretals*, *Extravagants* and *Clementines*, are all inserted in the body of the Canon Law of the Church of *Rome*, and so are made as good and current Popery as ever was coyned in the Council of *Trent*: and now, after all this, me thinks 'tis impossible we should be so besotted, as to trust to the cruel courtesies of *Rome*, whose Religion breaths nothing but blood and slaughter. The cry indeed of the Roman Factors among us, is nothing but Teleration, and liberty of Conscience; and since the Laws have proscribed them for their Treasonous Practices, and for swearing themselves Vassals to the Pope, whose countermands (if they are faithful to their own Principles) must evacuate all their obligations to their natural Prince; What Tragical Exclamations do they make against Persecution? as if they meant to have the monopoly of it, that no body might persecute but themselves; and though in the Popish Dominions, they are as fell and rabbid as so many *Lybean* Tygers, yet no sooner do they set foot upon the English shores, but as if there were an Inchantment in the soil, the Wolves turn Sheep immediately, or at least disguise themselves in Sheeps cloathing: but if ever these sweet and merciful Gentlemen get into the Saddle again, we shall soon find them in another note, and Persecution will be zeal again, and Racks and Gibbets Catholick Arguments, and there will be no way to illuminate the understandings of us Hereticks, like the light of a flaming

ming Fagget : For how can we expect it should be otherwise, when we reflect upon what is past, when the *Marian* days are yet within our prospect? and 'tis not half an Age ago since *Ireland* swam in Protestant blood, which was spilt by the instigation of some of these fawning Hypocrites, who now declaim forsooth for liberty of conscience, and denie persecution and all its works : But this pretence, its evident, is only a copy of their countenances, and without all controversy the bottom of their design is only to perswade us to let them grow till they are strong enough to cut our throats; for 'tis the subtilty of these Harpys never to shew their talons till they have their prey within their reach : but if what they pretend were Real, Why do they not allow what they plead for, and indulge that liberty to dissenters abroad, which here they crave for themselves? Why do they not as much exclaim against the Spanish Inquisition, which hath been confirmed by so many Bulls of their own Popes, as they do against the English Laws, and condemn the barbarous cruelties of the one, as well as the milder severities of the other! for till they do so, we have reason to believe that 'tis not against Persecution they exclaim, but against being persecuted. But in the mean time, how can we expect that they should be merciful to our bodies, whose Religion damns our souls? or that if ever they get uppermost, [which God prevent:] they that are so uncharitable now, as to shut us out of Heaven; should be so charitable then, as not to drive us out of the world! For this is a Maxim founded upon the experience of all Ages, That that Religion which damns us when it is weak, will burn us when it is able.

Wherefore

Wherefore, since God in his mercy hath delivered us from the Romish Tyranny; let us with thankful hearts extoll and praise his goodness, and take heed for the future, least by our divisions, or apostacies we return again unto that yolk of bondage; and since the Emissaries of *Rome* are now so busily pursuing their old Maxim, *Divide, & Impera*, and blowing the coals of our divisions, in hope at last to warm their hands at our flames; O that we would now study the ways of peace, and reconciliation! and not like the miserable Jews, fall out among our selves, while the *Roman* is at our Gates; for all the time we are contending in the Ship, our Enemy is boring a hole in the bottom; and while we are fomenting our unhappy differences, and tearing our own wounds wider, the Priest and Jesuit are at work in our Doublets; who ever since their Gunpowder-Treason was defeated, have been strewing trains of Wild-fire among our selves, to make us our own Executioners, and blow us up by our own hands: For what else hath been their business among us, but only to raise sects and factions, and sow discords, and Divisions in the Church of *England*, which they know is the only Bulwark of the Protestant Religion among us. O would to God we would once heartily attempt to countermine them! as we might yet easily do. Would we but once lay aside our unchristian passions, and prejudices, and study mutual compliances, and prefer Religion before a Faction, and abate some little Punctilioes to the soberer, and more governable Dissenters: These things if they might obtain amongst us, would yet undoubtedly secure us against all the attempts of our Adversaries, and Render their most hopeful designs desperate, and unfeasible:

but



But if we will be deaf to all the Arguments which our
Common Interests, and dangers suggest to us, if we
will still squander into Sects and Parties, and nothing
will serve our turns but the Ruine of that poor Church;
which for so many years hath been the Shelter, and
Sanctuary of the Protestant Religion. The time may
come perhaps, when we may deeply repent of our own
Follies; and remember, with scorn in our eyes, that we
had once an opportunity to be happy. Let me therefore
beseech you, even by all that does you bear to the Pro-
testant Religion, to your own safety, and to the lives,
and souls of your Posterity; to lay aside all Faction,
Bitterness, and Animosity; lest by your unchristian
Divisions, you open the Flood-gates of Popery on your
selves, and cut a gap to let in the *Syrian Lake* of Ig-
norance, Idolatry, Superstition, and Blood; which
God of his Infinite Mercy avert. To whom be Honor,
and Glory, and Power, and Dominion, *For ever,*

[illegible]

F I N I S

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